

## Sophomore Summer Reading Expectations for *The Odyssey*

**Assigned version:** *The Essential Odyssey* translated and edited by Stanley Lombardo.

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*The Odyssey*, an epic poem of 24 books, chronicles the great Greek warrior and strategist Odysseus's 10-year journey home to Ithaca after the Greeks defeated Troy in the 10-year battle known as the Trojan War (remember he devised the plan of the Trojan Horse). It is a tale of homecoming that spans 10 more years and begins in *media res*, which means it starts in the middle of the action. Books 1-4 deal with Telemachus, Odysseus's son, attempting to find out information about his father and being guided by the goddess Athena. By the time Book 1 begins, Odysseus has been gone for about 19 years. Books 5-12 take us back about 9 years and deal with Odysseus's trials from leaving Troy to arriving on Ithaca, and Books 13-24 deal with the aftermath of his arrival home.

Please read the Introduction to Lombardo's text pages ix-xxiv. We will begin our discussion on the first day of school with the Introduction.

**You will have a test over *The Odyssey* during the first seminar, the first 75 minute class period, of the year.**

The test will have an objective character id section, a section in which you identify and analyze pivotal moments in the epic, and a brief short answer section revolving around major themes evident in the epic. After some discussion of *The Odyssey* the first week or two of school, you will complete written responses to the epic poem.

### Required Annotations in book:

#### Character Epithets:

As you read, keep track of *descriptions of characters* or *character epithets* (a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or thing—Merriam-Webster). Ex: Poseidon is called "The Earthshaker" (I. l. 80). You may want to keep a running list of character epithets on a separate sheet of paper.

Below is a list of characters to focus your attention on:

Circe	Melanthius	Penelope
Calypso	Hermes	Euryclēia
Poseidon	Odysseus	Scylla
Athena	Telemachus	Charybdis
Anticleia	Antinous	Sirens
Eumaeus	Cyclops	Agamemnon
Eurymachus	Zeus	Achilles

### Greek Values or Beliefs:

As you read, find examples of these themes/Greek values; annotate for them:

1. hospitality (*xenia*)—extremely important to Zeus (feed/bathe guests, then ask questions-no exceptions, give gifts)
2. moderation—neither too much nor too little of anything
3. heroism—heroic culture; gained by heroic deeds (mainly in war)
4. piety—respect for the gods; "knowing man's place" and not crossing the gods
5. intervention by the gods—instances where various gods intervene in human affairs
6. rhetoric/oratory—the ability to persuade others with an argument
7. succumbing to temptation and/or overcoming/resisting temptation

### Places and People:

As you read, keep track of the various locations Odysseus visits and characters he meets (especially in Books 5-12). Consider what they may represent and what Odysseus learns from each encounter.

1. Calypso's Island (Book 5)
2. Island of the Phaeacians (Book 6)
- Odysseus begins telling his story:
3. Island of the Cicones (Book 9)
4. Island of Lotus-Eaters (Book 9)
5. Island of Cyclopes (Book 9)
6. Aeolia (Book 10)
7. The Laestrygonians (Book 10)
8. Circe's Island (Book 10)
9. Land of the Dead (Book 11)
10. Sirens (Book 12)
11. Scylla and Charybdis (Book 12)
12. Island of Helios's Cattle (Book 12)